

The New England Consortium's

# Quarterly

A Newsletter about Working with Toxic Materials,  
Health and Safety Training, Law and Public Policy



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## Haz-Mat Goes to High School



TNEC trainer Tom Estabrook shows equipment to students in a 40-hour Haz-Mat course this past fall that was part of an Advanced Placement Environmental Science Program at Essex Agricultural and Technical High School in Danvers, a first in the state. The Boston Globe ran a story in its North Weekly section on Nov. 4, which we reprint in this edition. See Story, Page 3.

## Love Canal's Lois Gibbs Still Takes On Toxins

At the invitation of TNEC, environmental justice activist Lois Gibbs recently spoke to and invigorated more than 100 people at UMASS Lowell. Gibbs had met earlier that day with TNEC's advisory board, then appeared in a public forum with Dr. Kenneth Geiser, director of the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute.



Lois Gibbs

More than 20 years ago, Gibbs  
*Continued on Page 4*

## 2002 OPEN ENROLLMENT TRAINING CALENDAR

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
40-Hour Hazardous Waste Site Worker	M-F 14-18		M-F 4-8	M-F 15-19	M-F 20-24	M-F 3-7*	M-F 15-19		M-F 9-13	M-F 21-25		M-F 2-6
8-Hour Hazardous Waste Site Worker Refresher	Wed. 9	Tue. 12	Wed. 13	Tue. 9	Wed. 15	Wed. 12	Tue. 9	Wed. 14	Tue. 17	Tue. 15	Tue. 19	Wed. 18
Special Feature 8-Hour Course			Site Worker Supervisor Thur. 21	Incident Management Thur. 11						Incident Management Tue. 1 Site Worker Supervisor Thur. 3		
24-Hour Emergency Responder		T-TH 5-7		T-TH 23-25		T-TH 18-20			T-TH 24-26		T-TH 12-14	
8-Hour Emergency Responder Refresher	Tue. 22		Tue. 19		Wed. 29			Thur. 8		Thur. 17		

\* This course will be offered for 3 credits at Keene State College in Keene, NH. Please contact KSC Continuing Education/Summer Session at 603.358.2290 to register for the course.

## Levenstein and Slatin Honored by UMASS

TNEC's Co-Principal Investigators Charles Levenstein and Craig Slatin were honored recently in separate awards by the University of Massachusetts.

Levenstein, an economist who is Professor of Work Environment Policy, received the Francis Cabot Lowell Faculty Award for his contributions in work and service. He

*Continued on Page 2*

## Levenstein and Slatin Honored for Work

*Continued from Page 1*

was selected for the award by his peers. Levenstein has published a number of books and is editor of *New Solutions*, an international environmental and occupational health policy journal. He obtained the initial federal grant for TNEC and led the project for years.



**Craig Slatin**

received the university's 2001 President's Award for Public Service. He was selected from a group of seven nominees in the entire UMASS system. He received the award in October.

Slatin, an Assistant Professor of Health Education and Policy,

Slatin's citation reads in part: "For the development of the highly regarded Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program & other environmentally responsive outreach activities."

In addition to his TNEC work, Slatin is involved in a five-year research project that is looking at health disparities in health care workers. The research is funded by a \$2-million grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. He also helped establish an environmental remediation training program for minorities in Lowell under federal brownfields funding. And he helped develop a new Health and Safety program at Malden Mills after its disastrous fire several years ago.

### Yes, There's Been a Change ...

You're not seeing things -- we've made some changes in the *Quarterly's* typefaces, TNEC's logo, and so forth. Since we will soon begin our fourteenth year of publication, we felt a change would be refreshing.

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT at UMASS LOWELL

- Interdisciplinary curriculum focusing on how the interactions of business, policy makers, community groups, and professionals affect community development
- Focus on understanding that healthy and sustained economic development rests not only with business, but on community social structures
- Students and faculty involved with community partnerships and research
- Graduates prepared for professional roles involving research, consulting, and strategic planning in business, local, state, and national development and planning agencies, and non-profit organizations working on economic and social development
- We offer a 2-year Master of Arts and a Certificate Program

Visit our Web Site: [www.uml.edu/Dept/RESD](http://www.uml.edu/Dept/RESD) or call 978.934.2900.

### WORK ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM UMASS Lowell

Master's and Doctoral Degrees in Industrial Hygiene (ABET-Accredited), Occupational Ergonomics, Occupational Epidemiology, Work Environment Policy, Cleaner Production & Pollution Prevention.

For Information: 978.934.3250 or <http://www.uml.edu/Dept/WE>

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# SKILL DRILL



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## By Corey Dulling Boston Globe Correspondent

When Tim Gravelese first learned one of the requirements for the Advanced Placement Environmental Science Program at Essex Agricultural and Technical High School in Danvers was to take a 40-hour course dealing with hazardous materials, he was excited.

After terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and with growing concern over anthrax exposures, Gravelese realized that the course had become a lot more meaningful.

"It did scare me at first," said Gravelese, an 18-year-old senior from Beverly. "Now, it doesn't, because I know how to handle it and what to do."

Gravelese and nine other students

in the three-year program recently completed a seven-week course in which they learned how to deal with low-risk hazardous materials.

The course, which is taught by instructors from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and sponsored by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, is the first of its kind in the state.

On Oct. 18, students fulfilled their last requirement of the hazardous materials course by participating in a hands-on final that involved working on a mock hazardous spill.

Working as if the spill were real, the students found a victim who was overcome by an unknown toxin. They roped off the contaminated site, known as the "hot zone," and sent an entry team dressed in bio-hazard suits and masks and equipped with oxygen tanks to retrieve the victim.

The students were told that the victim was a farmer who had collapsed after coming into contact with muriatic acid, or hydrogen chloride.

The team then took the victim inside the decontamination area, or "warm zone," set up inside the school's field house, where it quickly but cautiously followed steps to decontaminate. If the contamination had been real, the victim would then enter a "cold zone" and be showered.

The students also had to clean up the spill area.

After the final, which included a written test earlier in the week, the students received certificates of training as hazardous materials technicians and are now able to work for companies, such as Clean Harbors, that handle low-risk hazardous materials.

However, Amy Cline, one of two

*Continued on Page 4*

## HAZ-MAT Goes To High School

*Continued from Page 3*

teachers in the AP environmental science program at the school, said that all 10 students in the program have committed to going on to high-er education.

"It's something you don't see too often," said Cline. "It's usually around 50-50, where half would get a job and the other half would go on to college."

Cline said that under Chapter 74 of state educational law for vocational schools, teachers are suppose to prepare students for both college and employment.

"I loved the course," said Gravelese. "I think there's a good chance that I might do it in college."

Gravelese added that with the heightened awareness of hazardous materials, the industry is bound to grow.

However, like many involved in the program, he felt that people should not feel threatened.

"Don't overreact, and take it one day at a time," said Gravelese. "As long as you follow procedures and do research before buying anything, you'll be all right."

Ashley Bragan, 18, of Lynn, who also took the course and plans to pursue the subject in college, said that the course has helped calm her fears.

"I think it's very important, because when you're watching the news, you tend to panic a little," said Bragan. "The course calms you down, it makes you feel a little better about it."

For Bernie Mizula, staff industrial hygienist at the New England Consortium and one of three instructors sent from UMASS Lowell, the program, which started three years ago, was long overdue.



"I thought it was a very great idea that they started this program," said Mizula. "I always thought that it was something that should have been taught at the elementary level. Even working in the garage, you need to know how to be safe."

The hazardous materials course is part of the AP environmental science major, which also has courses focusing on woodland and wetland ecology and marine biology.

During their first year in the program, sophomores went on a weeklong canoe ride down the Merrimack River, where they tested the quality of its water and did studies of the salt marshes.

Last year, the students went to Nova Scotia and Dalhousie University in Halifax, where they talked to officials from the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They studied different species in the Gulf of Maine, which extends to Cape Cod. Also during the year, students worked with the Massachusetts Audubon Society to clean up a beach in Marblehead.

In April, the students will conclude the three-year AP program when they travel to Cape May in New Jersey on a four-day trip to study the nearest southern ecosystem. They will then take an AP exam in May and, if all goes well, will be rewarded with not only a great experience, but three college credits.

## Gibbs Still Battling

*Continued from Page 1*

gained national recognition as the leader of a homeowners association that successfully fought for the clean-up and relocation of nearly 900 people from a highly contaminated site in Niagara Falls, N.Y.: Love Canal. Today, she is executive director of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice in Virginia.

Gibbs urged her listeners to work to "convince the decision-makers, convince the corporations to come up with some unique strategies that target not controlling technologies, but preventative technologies."

Several community action groups were represented in her Lowell audience, including the Lawrence Grassroots Initiative that had played a key part in forcing the closing of incineration plants in Lawrence.

The students in the River Ambassadors Program directed by Khan Chao at UMASS Lowell's Center for Family, Work and Community attended the forum and met with Gibbs. The River Ambassadors have used Gibbs' experience at Love Canal as the basis for a play they wrote and perform (locally and nationally) to teach lessons about environmental activism. Also attending were students of the Environmental Studies Advanced Placement class at the Essex Agricultural and Technical High School (see story on page 3).

## Monsanto Faces Plaintiffs in Suit over PCBs Pollution

Monsanto Co. emitted millions of pounds of PCBs it knew to be highly toxic from its plant in Anniston, Alabama, and concealed its actions and its product's toxicity for decades. In this case the local people have levels of PCBs in their systems that one expert said are 10 times higher than the levels in people who live near the Hudson River, where the EPA, in a controversial decision, recently ordered GE to clean its PCB contamination at a cost of \$480 million. The story was reported on the front page of *The Washington Post* on New Year's Day, only days before 3,600 plaintiffs were due to face Monsanto in court.

"Monsanto enjoyed a lucrative four-decade monopoly on PCB production in the United States and battled to protect that mon-

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*'We can't afford to lose one dollar of business.'*

*-- Monsanto internal memo*

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nopoly long after PCBs were confirmed as a global pollutant. 'We can't afford to lose one dollar of business,' one internal memo concluded," the *Post's* Michael Grunwald reported.

"The EPA and the World Health Organization classify PCBs as 'probable carcinogens,' and while no one has determined whether the people in Anniston are sicker than average, Solutia [a Monsanto spin-off] has opposed proposals for comprehensive health studies as unnecessary. And it has not apologized for any of its contamination or deception." Grunwald said that negative effects of exposure to PCBs were reported as early as 1937, but the public was informed

only in the late 1960s. Monsanto however, knew of serious health consequences early in that time.

The company, according to Grunwald, has spent only \$40 million to clean up the wastes in Anniston, though Solutia reportedly is working on a final plan for the work. For more information, go to *Poisoned by PCBs: Thirty Years Later, Court Documents Reveal Monsanto's Toll on an Alabama Town* on the internet at [www.chemicalindustryarchives.org/dirtysecrets/anniston/1.asp](http://www.chemicalindustryarchives.org/dirtysecrets/anniston/1.asp), an Environmental Working Group site.

### ***UCONN Involved in New Hazards Center under EPA***

The University of Connecticut at Storrs is one of 22 universities that have affiliated in five new Hazardous Substance Research Centers under grants totaling \$22 million from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Their goal is to do basic and applied research, technology transfer, and community outreach. This includes work on remediation and redevelopment of brownfields, which are unused former industrial and commercial sites whose re-use is "complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination," according to the EPA.

Thirty percent of the total funding has been apportioned to help those who live in low-income areas participate in decisions about managing local hazardous substances.

The centers will be based at Johns Hopkins, Purdue, Oregon State, Louisiana State, and Colorado State universities. Johns Hopkins' task is to evaluate processes for detecting, assessing, and managing risks of hazardous substances in city settings; the other four centers will study the removal of environ-

mental contaminants.

The Johns Hopkins Center, which is a consortium of northeastern universities, including UCONN, will offer "technical expertise to community groups, state, municipal and local environmental regulators and industry," the EPA said.

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### ***Rhode Island offers tax incentives to businesses that re-use former mills.***

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UCONN's initial research as part of the project is a study of the "Geochemistry, Biochemistry, and Surface/Groundwater Interactions for As, Cr, Ni, Zn, and Cd with Applications to Contaminated Waterfronts." For more information, go to [www.harc.org/harc/html/urban/html](http://www.harc.org/harc/html/urban/html) on the internet.

### ***Providence Group Funded to Train Brownfields Workers***

Groundwork Providence Inc. in Rhode Island has won \$200,000 from the federal EPA to train 90 participants from the city's Enterprise Community neighborhoods where poverty rates are as high as 47%. The training will focus on skills for brownfields reclamation.

It is one of 10 new Job Training Demonstration Projects for the EPA, and the only one in New England.

Providence has scores of old, unused mills. About 150 of them are viewed for potential redevelopment or preservation and the state has offered tax incentives to businesses that re-use former mills.

The EPA noted, "The 252-hour environmental technician training program will consist of health and safety, lead and asbestos abatement, and innovative technologies. The [city] has committed to placing graduates on its list of first source hires."

## TNEC Plans Internet Evaluation, Seeks Grads' Input

TNEC works hard to deliver health and safety training that is enjoyable, helps participants learn about preventing illness, injury, and even death on the job, and meets the many learning needs and styles of participants in our courses. All participants complete evaluation forms at the end of each course to help us assess the effectiveness of curriculum and instructors and improve quality. We also want to know whether course participants apply what they've learned back at the work site. Thus, we must conduct an impact evaluation to learn about this aspect.

As part of our Advanced Training Technologies project supported by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), we have created a follow-up survey that can be conducted through the worldwide web. Craig Slatin, Project Director, and Dr. Beverly Volicer, a biostatistician who chairs the Department of Health and Clinical Sciences at UMASS Lowell, have developed a web-based survey

questionnaire. We plan initially to survey everyone who has completed a 40- or 24-hour course 6-18 months before we start the survey. After that, we will make monthly contacts with participants who have completed a course within the last six months.

NIEHS, TNEC's funder, requires us to evaluate our training

to better understand how training and education work to protect the health and safety of workers. Your support will help us keep our funding and learn about the impacts that result from training. We need your help, we need your participation. Only you can tell us how the training is useful in your work environment. We look forward to your responses.

### TNEC Manages FEMA Lending Library of Videos

The Region 1 office of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Boston has transferred its Video Lending Library to TNEC at UMASS Lowell. The library contains more than 400 Hazmat-related videos, covering topics such as:

- Hazmat Chemicals / Gases
- Hazmat Emergency Medical Services
- Hazmat Exercises
- Hazmat Firefighting
- Hazmat Health Issues
- Hazmat Incidents / Fires

- Hazmat Oil Response
- Hazmat Planning / Training
- Hazmat Terrorism

The library remains the property of FEMA but TNEC now houses and manages it. You may request a catalog of videos by contacting TNEC at 978-934-3257 (voice), 978-934-2012 (fax) or TNEC@uml.edu (e-mail). The catalog contains a form that may be duplicated to borrow videos for your organization. TNEC aims eventually to offer the catalog and order form on-line.

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